

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 407 834

FL 024 483

AUTHOR Faingold, Eduardo D.  
TITLE The Evaluation of Linguistic Errors in Spanish Composition.  
PUB DATE May 97  
NOTE 13p.; Paper resented at the Annual Meeting of the Cincinnati Conference on Romance Languages and Literatures (17th, Cincinnati, OH, May 7-10, 1997).  
PUB TYPE Reports - Research (143) -- Speeches/Meeting Papers (150)  
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.  
DESCRIPTORS Error Analysis (Language); Error Patterns; Film Criticism; \*Grammar; Higher Education; Language Research; \*Second Languages; \*Spanish; \*Spelling; \*Vocabulary; \*Writing (Composition); Writing Instruction

ABSTRACT

An exercise in the evaluation of errors in Spanish (second language) composition is reported. The exercise, based on J. M. Hendrickson's "discovery" approach to learning, concerned correction of three error types: lexicon; grammar; and spelling. Subjects were 13 native English-speaking university students in a Spanish language program. In the first draft of a film review, the teacher provided feedback on the presence and location of errors but did not provide correct forms; the students were then responsible for finding the source of error and correcting it. The teacher subsequently built a profile of linguistic errors made by individual students and by the majority of the class, which is presented and discussed here. The exercise has as its objectives to help students correct errors in future compositions and to support classroom discussion of errors. Contains seven references.  
(MSE)

\*\*\*\*\*  
\* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made \*  
\* from the original document. \*  
\*\*\*\*\*

## The Evaluation of Linguistic Errors in Spanish Composition

Eduardo D. Faingold  
Dept. of Languages, The University of Tulsa

17th Annual Cincinnati Conference on Romance Languages and Literatures  
University of Cincinnati, May 7 - 10, 1997

**BEST COPY AVAILABLE**

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS  
MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Eduardo Faingold

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES  
INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
Office of Educational Research and Improvement  
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION  
CENTER (ERIC)

This document has been reproduced as  
received from the person or organization  
originating it.

Minor changes have been made to  
improve reproduction quality.

Points of view or opinions stated in this  
document do not necessarily represent  
official OERI position or policy.

## **1. Introduction**

This paper presents a novel exercise for the evaluation of linguistic errors in Spanish composition. This exercise is based on Hendrickson's (1978, 1980) 'discovery' approach and allows students a greater responsibility for their own learning. The exercise concerns the correction of three types of errors: (a)lexicon, (b)grammar, and (c)orthography.

The exercise is based on the analysis of two drafts of a film review written at home by a class of thirteen Anglo students at The University of Tulsa; the latter participated in a larger project that studies the acquisition and learning of Spanish composition skills by forty-five Hispanics and Anglos at the University of Tulsa (TU) and the State University of New York at Stony Brook (SUNY) (Faingold 1995).

The teacher provided 'indirect corrections', i.e. feedback on the presence and location of errors, but did not provide the correct grammatical, lexical, and orthographic structure in the correction of the first draft; the students 'discovered' the source of errors and rewrote the composition. Subsequently, the teacher builds a profile of the linguistic errors made by individual students as well as the majority of the class. The purpose of this exercise is two-fold: First, it helps students to correct errors in future compositions and enhances awareness of student's errors; and second, it helps the teacher to discuss grammar in class, since it provides 'natural' examples of linguistic errors that Anglo students are likely to make in a Spanish composition class.

## **2. The TU and SUNY project of Spanish writing**

Except Faingold's (1995) recent pre-programmatic paper, no studies are available

comparing the Spanish writing of Hispanics and Anglos at American universities. That studies of this kind are needed is obvious given the hot political debates over educational measures and teaching "standard Spanish" vs. stigmatized varieties of Spanish. The University of Tulsa/SUNY project documents the development of writing by Hispanic and Anglo undergraduates at the State University of New York at Stony Brook (SUNY) and the University of Tulsa (TU), and relies on a large number of subjects in a real classroom situation (Faingold 1995).

Data were collected from two drafts of weekly compositions written by 45 students (200, 300, and 1000 words). The compositions are divided into six carefully designed writing tasks: (i)summary, (ii)film and book review, (iii)business letter, (iv)description, (v)narrative, (vi)long essay. The composition tasks are in turn divided into two major groups: Those written in class under some degree of pressure--with less time, without grammars, dictionary of synonyms, of usage, of verbs, etc.--and those written at home. The evaluation method is unobtrusive and natural, since it is restricted to the student's ongoing work. The teacher provides 'indirect corrections', i.e. feedback on the presence and location of errors, but does not provide the correct morphological, lexical, or syntactic structure in the correction of the first draft (Hendrickson 1978, 1980). The teacher also provides detailed comments on content and organization. The student 'discovers' the source of errors and rewrites the composition. Thus, the findings stem from two ways in which the compositions are coded: An evaluation of the linguistic errors and a holistic composition profile. In the first procedure, information on error type is obtained (e.g. wrong choice of grammar,

vocabulary, orthography); and in the second, a holistic profile is created following Valdés et al's (1986) 'reader oriented' approach (e.g. content, organization, grammar, vocabulary, and mechanics).

### **3. Results and discussion**

This section discusses three types of errors in a film review written by thirteen Anglo students in a Spanish composition class at the University of Tulsa. The latter were drawn from a larger study of Spanish composition skills by Anglos and Hispanics at the State University of New York at Stony Brook and The University of Tulsa-- the TU/SUNY project of the acquisition and learning of Spanish writing. Errors are of three types: (i)lexicon (e.g. violation of selection restrictions, registers, interference, borrowing), (ii)grammar (e.g. agreement, prepositions, auxiliars *ser/estar*, omission of object and relative pronouns, prepositions, articles), and (iii)orthography (e.g. written stress, letters).

#### **3.1. Lexicon**

Table 1 shows errors of lexicon in film reviews written by Anglos in a Spanish composition class at The University of Tulsa.

insert Table 1

In Table 1, examples (1)*Scotland/England*, and (2)*Navy* are borrowings from English,

since the students use the English language name of the country or military service, rather than Spanish *Inglaterra, Escocia, Marina*. Similarly, examples (5)*juega* and (9)*preguntar* are errors of interference from English, since in Spanish 'play' can mean either *actuar* or *jugar*, and 'ask' can mean either *preguntar* or *pedir*. Examples (4)*erase* and (6)*Nomás* are errors of register, since in (4) the student uses a 'high-looking' register (rather than the formula employed in children's tales--*había una vez...*), while in (6) the student uses a Mexican colloquialism (rather than the standard word employed in Spanish writings--*inmediatamente*). Examples (7)*fusila* and (8)*hicieron* are a violation of the selection restrictions of Spanish, since *asesinos* and *película* cannot be the objects of *fusilar* and *hacer* respectively--except in 'marked' cases when, e.g., the former are in the military and the actors in the movie are also the producers or directors (see, e.g., Faingold 1995b, 1996, for discussion of markedness in linguistics). Similarly, in (3)*cuento* is another violation of the selection restrictions of Spanish, since the word used to designate the movie's 'story' (*cuento*) is *libreto* ('script').

### 3.2. Grammar

Table 2 shows errors of grammatical choice in film reviews written in Spanish by Anglos.

insert Table 2

In Table 2.1., examples (1) - (7) are all errors of agreement (masc./fem., sing./pl.).

In Table 2.2., examples (1) - (4), the students use the prepositions *a, por, para* ungrammatically, instead of the grammatical forms *en, con, a, del*.

In Table 2.3., the student uses the auxiliar *estar* instead of standard Spanish *ser*, the reason is, perhaps, interference from 'to be', which means both *ser* and *estar* in English.

Table 3 shows missing grammatical structures.

insert Table 3

In Table 3.1, the student's grammar lacks the indirect object pronoun *le*.

In Table 3.2., examples (1) - (2), the students lack the relative pronoun *que*.

In Table 3.3., examples (1) - (4), the students lack the prepositions *para, a, de*.

In Table 3.4., examples (1) - (2), the students lack the masc. sing. and fem. sing. articles *el, la*.

### 3.3. Orthography

Table 4 shows errors of orthography in film reviews written by Anglos in a Spanish composition class.

insert Table 4

In Table 4.1., examples (1) and (3), the students omit the standard written accent, while in (2) and (3) the students write accents where standard written Spanish has none.

In Table 4.2., examples (1) - (3), the students write the letters *t*, *n*, *ñ*, instead of standard Spanish *c*, *ñ*, *n*; in examples (4) - (5) the students omit the letters *e*, *t*, and in (6) the student inserts the letter *i* where standard written Spanish has none.

#### **4. Conclusion**

In sum, Anglo learners of written Spanish all make linguistic errors, including lexical as well grammatical and orthographic errors. On the basis of the linguistic errors discussed in this paper, the teacher builds a profile of paradigmatic errors made by individual students as well as the majority of the class; the latter serves as a guide for the correction of errors that individual students or the majority of the class are likely to make in future compositions, as well as material for future discussion of grammatical issues in class.

#### **5. References**

Faingold, E. D. 1995. The acquisition of first and second (Spanish) language writing. Penn State Conference on the Acquisition of Spanish as a First and Second Language. Penn State University. October 12 - 14, 1995.

Faingold, E. D. 1995b. The emergence of the article system in language acquisition, creolization, and history: A universal hierarchy of natural morphological markedness. H.

Pishwa & K. Maroldt (eds.). **The Development of Morphological Systematicity: A Cross-linguistic Perspective.** Tübingen: Gunter Narr.

Faingold, E. D. 1996. Child Language, Creolization, and Historical Change. Spanish in Contact with Portuguese. Tübingen: Gunter Narr.

Hendrickson, J. M. 1978. Error correction in foreign language teaching: Recent theory, research, and practice. **Modern Language Journal** 62: 387 - 398.

Hendrickson, J. M. 1980. The treatment of error in written work. **Modern Language Journal** 64: 216 - 221.

Valdés, G., Dvorak, T. & Hannum, T. 1989. **Composición. Proceso y Síntesis.** New York: McGraw Hill.

**Table 1**  
**Lexicon**

- (1) *Scotland* conquistó a *England* (Escocia)
- (2) La *Navy* en la película (Marina)
- (3) El *cuento* de la película (libreto)
- (4) *Erase* una vez (había)
- (5) Tom Cruise *juega* en la película (actúa)
- (6) *Nomás* después de... (inmediatamente)
- (7) Samuel Jackson *fusila* a los asesinos (mata)
- (8) Los actores *hicieron* bien la película (actuaron)
- (9) *preguntar* una cita (pedir)
- (10) la película es *publicada* (vista)

**Table 2**  
**Grammatical Choice**

**2.1. Agreement**

- (1) *el* película histórico (la)
- (2) *mucho* acción (mucha)
- (3) *un autor* (autora)
- (4) *libros magnífico* (magníficos)
- (5) *la* tema (el)
- (6) *los* mentes (las)
- (7) *efectos especial* (especiales)

**2.2. Prepositions**

- (1) golpe *a* la cabeza (en)
- (2) quiere casarse *a* Bill (con)
- (3) invitación *por* una cita (a)
- (4) Tiene miedo *para* el vampiro (del)

**2.3. Auxiliars ser/estar**

*está* un admirador de Bill (es)

**Table 3**  
**Missing Grammatical Structure**

**3.1. Indirect object pronoun (me, te, le, se, etc.)**

la princesa 0 dijo a él (le)

**3.2. Relative pronoun**

(1) la película 0 miré (que)  
(2) esta película es para personas 0 les gustan ([a las] que)

**3.3. Preposition**

(1) 0 responder a esta pregunta, yo voy... (para)  
(2) quiere matar 0 las personas (a)  
(3) tiene miedo 0 preguntar (de)  
(4) la vida 0 casado (de)

**3.4. Article**

(1) la cita es 0 punto culminante (el)  
(2) aprender sobre 0 amor y 0 vida (el/la)

**Table 4**  
**Orthography**

**4.1. Stress**

- (1) *pelicula* (película)
- (2) *tráma* (trama)
- (3) *actuarón* (actuaron)
- (4) *ficción* (ficción)

**4.2. Letter**

- (1) *investigación* (investigación)
- (2) *ano* (año)
- (3) *esceña* (escena)
- (4) *speciales* (especiales)
- (5) *toruró* (torturó)
- (6) *admirable* (admirable)



***U.S. Department of Education***  
***Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI)***  
***Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC)***

ERIC

# **REPRODUCTION RELEASE**

(Specific Document)

## **I. DOCUMENT IDENTIFICATION:**

Title:	The Evaluation of Linguistic Errors in Spanish Composition		
Author(s):	Eduardo Faingold		
Corporate Source:	The University of Tulsa		Publication Date:
		May, 1997	

## II. REPRODUCTION RELEASE:

In order to disseminate as widely as possible timely and significant materials of interest to the educational community, documents announced in the monthly abstract journal of the ERIC system, *Resources in Education* (RIE), are usually made available to users in microfiche, reproduced paper copy, and electronic/optical media, and sold through the ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS) or other ERIC vendors. Credit is given to the source of each document, and, if reproduction release is granted, one of the following notices is affixed to the document.

If permission is granted to reproduce and disseminate the identified document, please CHECK ONE of the following two options and sign at the bottom of the page.

**Check here**

**For Level 1 Release:**  
Permitting reproduction in  
microfiche (4" x 6" film) or  
other ERIC archival media  
(e.g., electronic or optical)  
*and* paper copy.

The sample sticker shown below will be affixed to all Level 1 documents

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND  
DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL  
HAS BEEN GRANTED BY  
  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
  
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES  
INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

The sample sticker shown below will be affixed to all Level 2 documents

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND  
DISSEMINATE THIS  
MATERIAL IN OTHER THAN PAPER  
COPY HAS BEEN GRANTED BY  
  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
*Sample*  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES  
INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

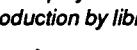
**Check here**

**For Level 2 Release:**  
Permitting reproduction in  
microfiche (4" x 6" film) or  
other ERIC archival media  
(e.g., electronic or optical),  
but *not* in paper copy.

## Level 1

## Level 2

Documents will be processed as indicated provided reproduction quality permits. If permission to reproduce is granted, but neither box is checked, documents will be processed at Level 1.

<p><i>"I hereby grant to the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) nonexclusive permission to reproduce and disseminate this document as indicated above. Reproduction from the ERIC microfiche or electronic/optical media by persons other than ERIC employees and its system contractors requires permission from the copyright holder. Exception is made for non-profit reproduction by libraries and other service agencies to satisfy information needs of educators in response to discrete inquiries."</i></p>			
<p>Signature: </p>		<p>Printed Name/Position/Title: Prof. Eduardo Feingold</p>	
<p>Organization/Address: The University of Tulsa 600 S. College Tulsa OK 74104 -3189</p>		<p>Telephone: (918) 631-2160</p>	<p>FAX: (918) -631-2033</p>
		<p>E-Mail Address: feingold@decenturi.s. 1997</p>	<p>Date: 5/19/97</p>

### III. DOCUMENT AVAILABILITY INFORMATION (FROM NON-ERIC SOURCE):

If permission to reproduce is not granted to ERIC, or, if you wish ERIC to cite the availability of the document from another source, please provide the following information regarding the availability of the document. (ERIC will not announce a document unless it is publicly available, and a dependable source can be specified. Contributors should also be aware that ERIC selection criteria are significantly more stringent for documents that cannot be made available through EDRS.)

Publisher/Distributor:

.....  
Address:

.....  
Price:

### IV. REFERRAL OF ERIC TO COPYRIGHT/REPRODUCTION RIGHTS HOLDER:

If the right to grant reproduction release is held by someone other than the addressee, please provide the appropriate name and address:

Name:

.....  
Address:

### V. WHERE TO SEND THIS FORM:

Send this form to the following ERIC Clearinghouse:

ERIC Clearinghouse on Assessment  
and Instructional Materials  
1118 21st Street, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20037

However, if solicited by the ERIC Facility, or if making an unsolicited contribution to ERIC, return this form (and the document being contributed) to:

#### ERIC Processing and Reference Facility

1100 West Street, 2d Floor  
Laurel, Maryland 20707-3598

Telephone: 301-497-4080

Toll Free: 800-799-3742

FAX: 301-953-0263

e-mail: ericfac@inet.ed.gov

WWW: <http://ericfac.piccard.csc.com>